

**OK Not a Donor State for 2<sup>nd</sup> Straight Year**

**Istook Secures \$50 Million for Crosstown Expressway!**

*Washington, DC* -- Fifty million dollars—the largest-ever single-year funding—is committed to Oklahoma City’s Interstate 40 Crosstown Expressway in the final spending bill passed by the U.S. House of Representatives Saturday. The money was secured by U.S. Rep. Ernest Istook (R-OK), who chairs the appropriations subcommittee that controls national transportation funding.

Also, thanks to this and other special funding in Istook’s bill, he says Oklahoma will avoid being a highway donor state for the second straight year. The bill also includes long-awaited transportation reimbursements to the state of Oklahoma of a combined \$14.6 million for the 2001 ice storm (\$2.938 m) and the I-40 bridge collapse (\$11.665 m) from the transportation emergency reserve account.

Istook stated that although additional federal dollars can be expected for the I-40 project, it would likely be at a slower annual pace than this year’s \$50-million-per-year rate. Istook noted that neither the state nor local government has provided any funding to aid the \$350-million project, and he repeated his requests that state and local leaders devote financial help for the project.

Total federal money provided to date for the project now totals \$195-million, as follow:

- 1998 legislation provided \$106-million, but dispersed it over a six-year period, not during a single year.
- Last year, Istook obtained \$30-million for the project.
- The remainder has been added in increments during other years.

**“This is the year the work will become highly-visible,” Istook said. “It’s not just a replacement for the deteriorating overhead expressway. It’s a major expansion to ten lanes, plus a new local boulevard for access to downtown. It will redefine downtown Oklahoma City in a positive way.**

**“As I’ve reminded state and local leaders, their total reliance on federal funding is adding years to the construction time. They constantly comment that this is the highest priority transportation project anywhere in Oklahoma, yet not a single penny of state or local dollars has been committed to the project. The state is managing the work, but the federal government is paying for it.**

**“The new boulevard that will be built on the current route of I-40 by itself will cost an estimated \$45-million, and will create an attractive new way to access downtown, Bricktown, and the riverfront. But we can’t build the boulevard until all the other work is done, so the absence of non-federal funds will delay the city’s boulevard most of all.”**

**OTHER OKLAHOMA FUNDS IN THE BILL**

Istook said he’s also pleased that the bill has over \$40 million in extra highway and transit funding for Oklahoma (in addition to the \$50-million for the Crosstown), meaning the state will get back at least as much as it pays in federal fuel taxes. The state was not a donor state last fiscal year, either, thanks to \$100 million in road and transit add-ons that Istook placed in last year’s spending bill.

**“Oklahoma’s central location is a great asset for our economic development,” Istook said. “But we can’t take advantage of it unless we have better transportation that will move freight as well as people. Last year’s bill and this year’s bill are huge steps forward to build a better Oklahoma.”**

Istook said he would make a later announcement about other help for Oklahoma that is part of the same legislation.